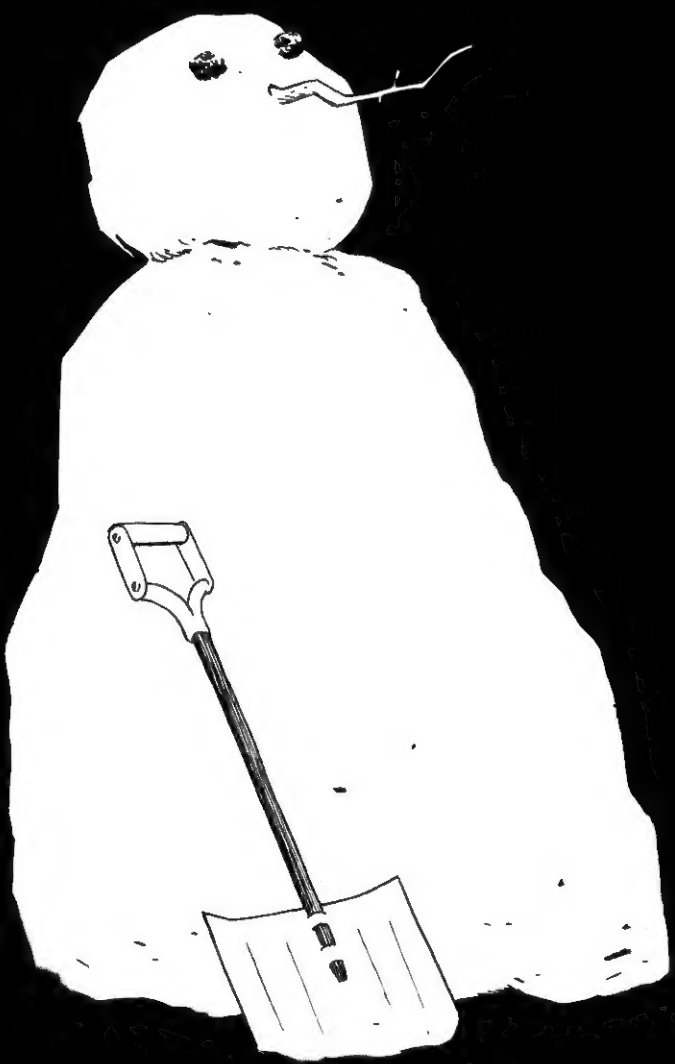
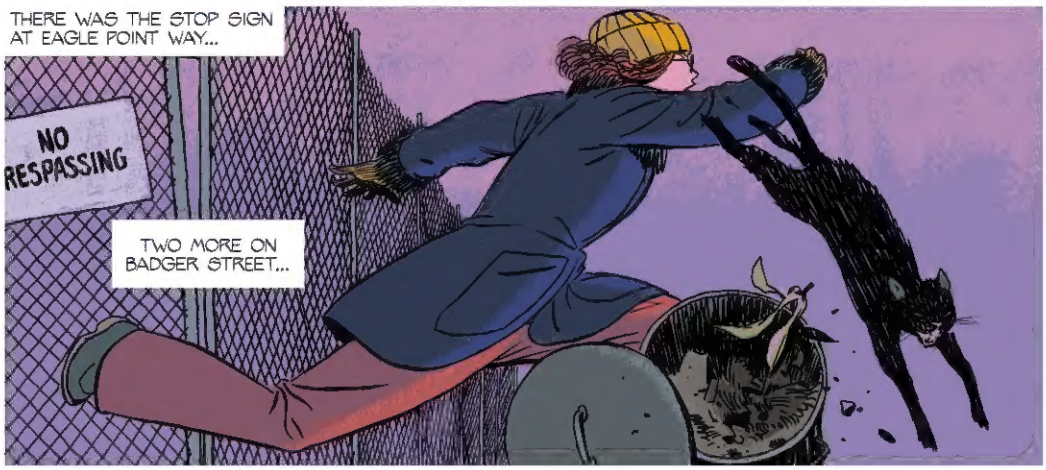
Friday
Ed Brubaker
Marcos Martín
Muntsa Vicente



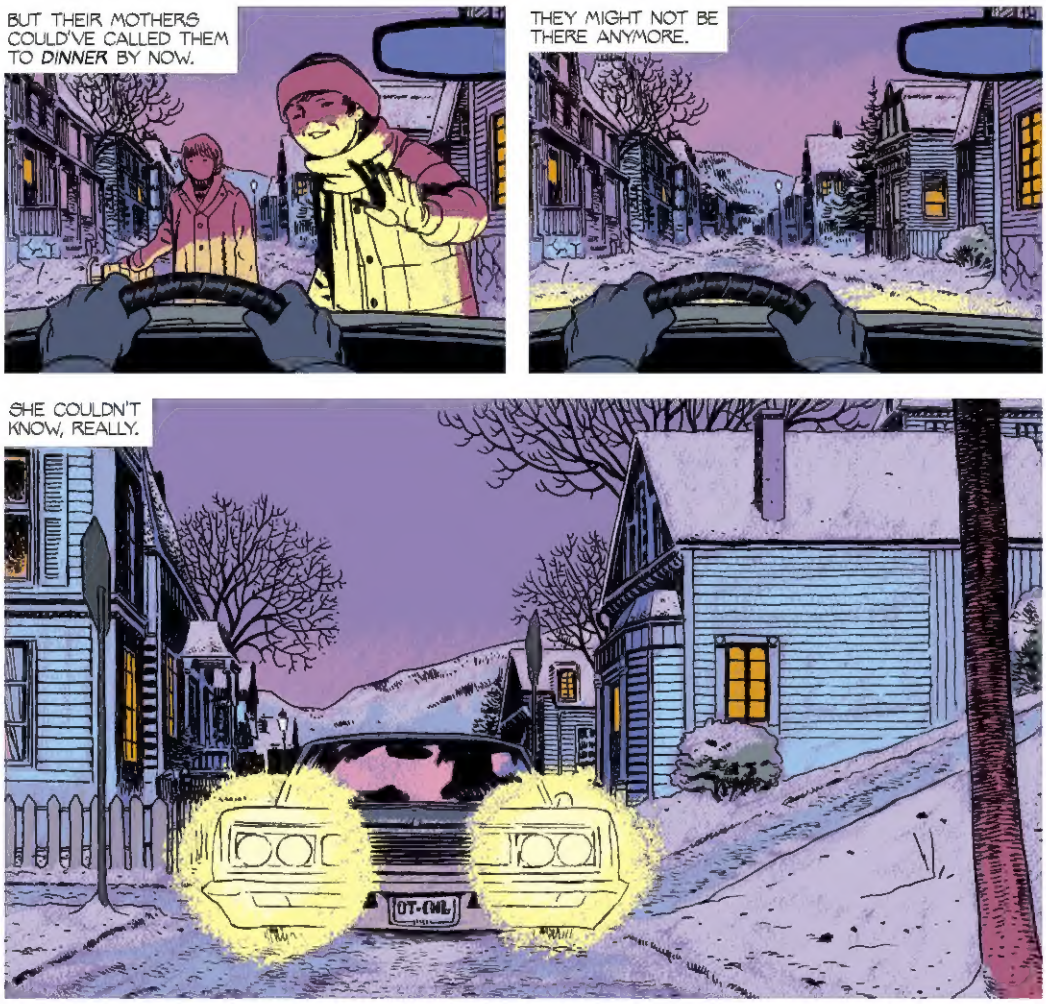
Chapter Six
In the Nick of Time
HEY FRIDAY!
NO TIME TO TALK, TIMMY!

FRIDAY DID A MATH PROBLEM IN HER HEAD AS SHE RAN...
THE SHORTCUT HOME *ON FOOT...*
VERSUS THE LONG WAY AROUND *IN A CAR.*
Rebel
SHE PICTURED THE DETECTIVE'S PATH...
UP MAPLE TO THE STOPLIGHT...

THEN WINDING THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD.


THERE WAS THE STOP SIGN AT EAGLE POINT WAY...
NO TRESPASSING
TWO MORE ON BADGER STREET...

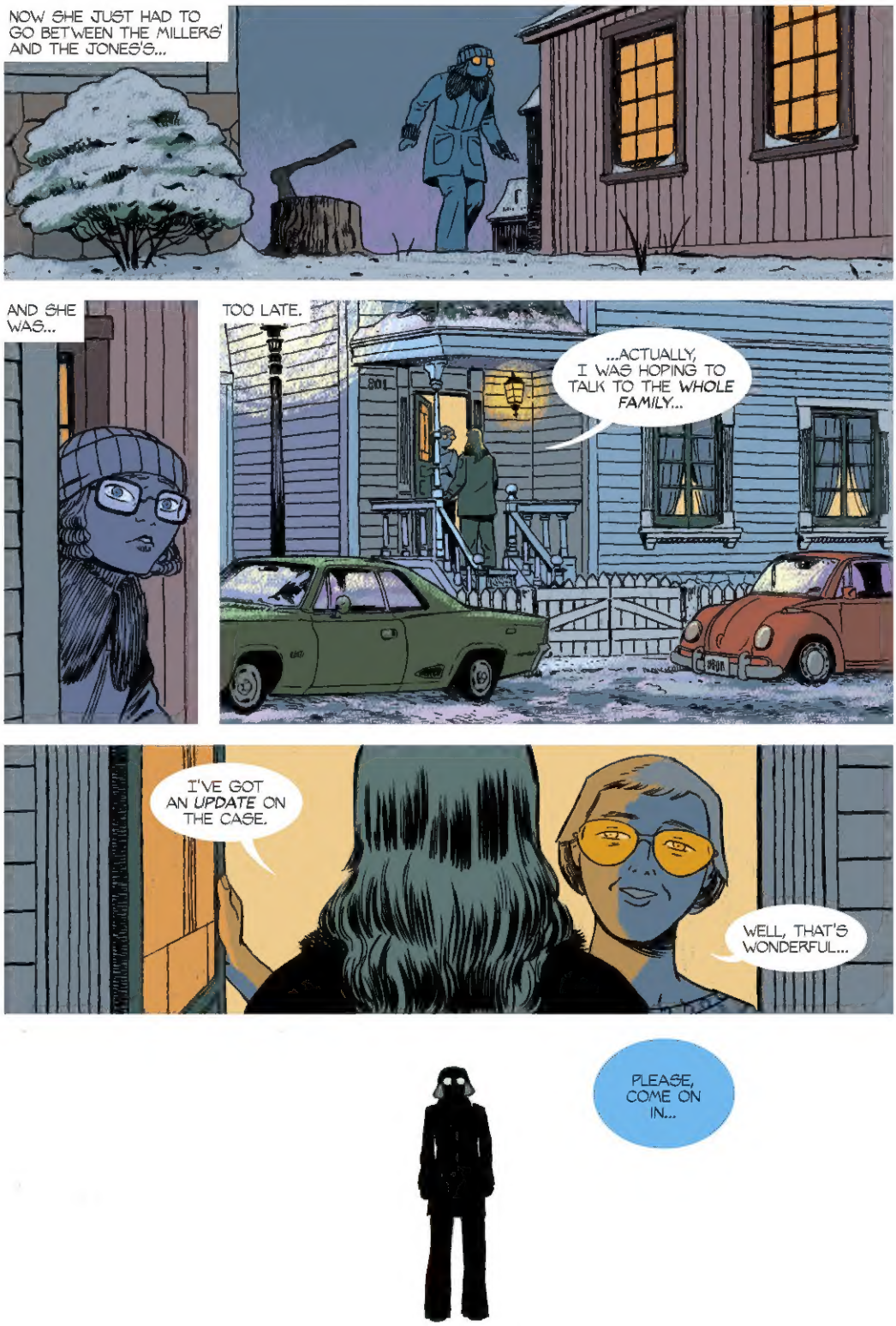
AND THERE WERE USUALLY SOME KIDS SLEDDING DOWN *RAVENSCROFT* AT THAT INTERSECTION...
THAT COULD DELAY A CAR.

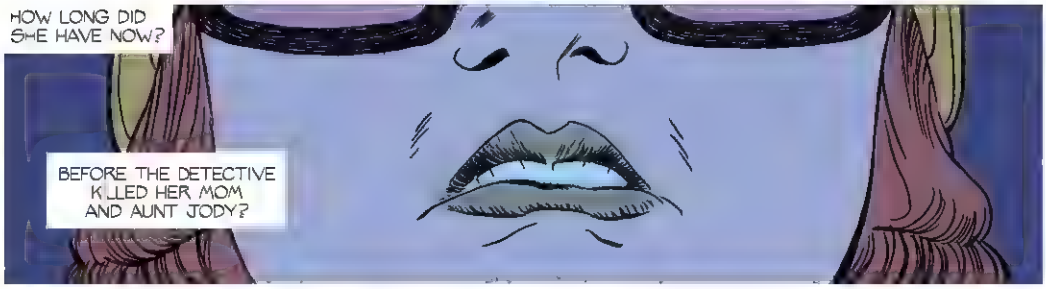

BUT THEIR MOTHERS COULD'VE CALLED THEM TO *DINNER* BY NOW.
THEY MIGHT NOT BE THERE ANYMORE.
SHE COULDN'T KNOW, REALLY.
OT-(ML

SO, THE MATH WASN'T ON HER SIDE...
WHICH MEANT SHE'D HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE McKLUSKYS' YARD...

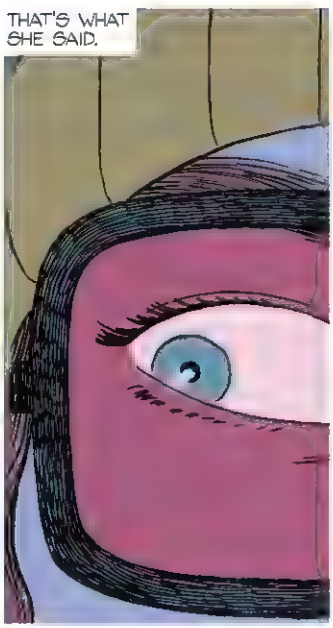
...WHERE *RIPPER* LIVED.
GGGGGRRR

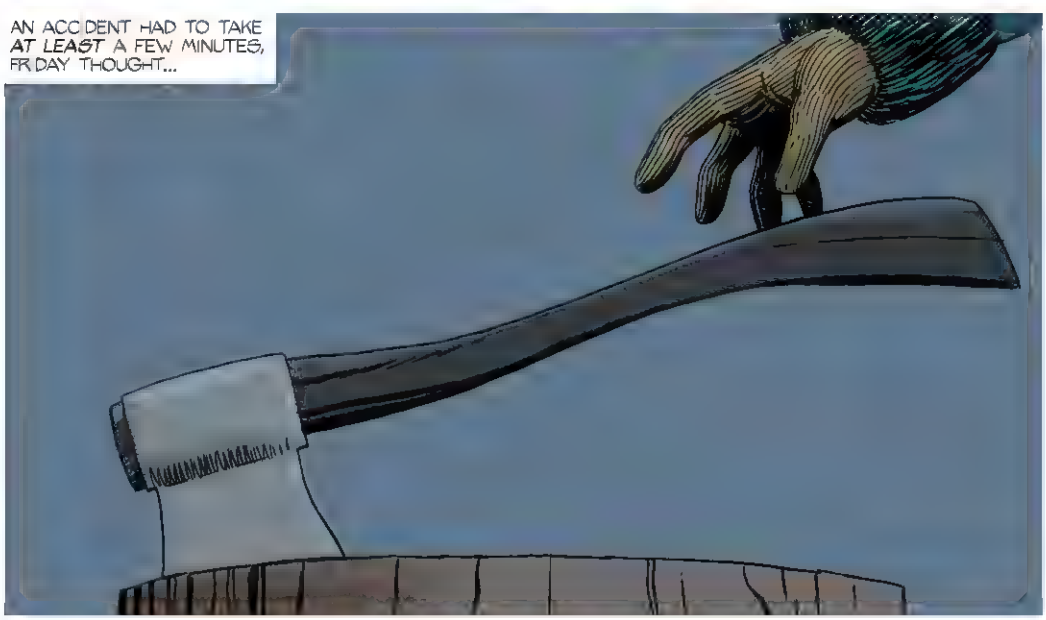
SHIT!
ARRK ARRK ARRK
SHIT!
SHIT!
OOOF--!
...FUCK...
OKAY, SHE MADE IT...


NOW SHE JUST HAD TO GO BETWEEN THE MILLERS' AND THE JONES'S...
AND SHE WAS...
TOO LATE.
...ACTUALLY, I WAS HOPING TO TALK TO THE WHOLE FAMILY...
I'VE GOT AN UPDATE ON THE CASE.
WELL, THAT'S WONDERFUL...
PLEASE, COME ON IN...


HOW LONG DID SHE HAVE NOW?
BEFORE THE DETECTIVE KILLED HER MOM AND AUNT JODY?

NO, WAIT- SHE SAID SHE'D MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN *ACCIDENT*...
GIRL AND HER PARENTS KILLED IN A HOUSE FIRE...


THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID.


AN ACCIDENT HAD TO TAKE *AT LEAST* A FEW MINUTES, FRIDAY THOUGHT...

SHE COULD STILL SAVE THEM.
JODY, I CAN'T.
KRISS...
WELL, THAT'S MUCH BETTER...
NOW WHERE HAS THAT DAUGHTER OF YOURS GOTTEN TO...?

RIGHT BEHIND YOU...
YAA-AHHH!!

HAKK
AUHH--!
TNKK
YOU FUCKING BITCH.

MOM... CAN YOU HEAR ME?
AUNT JODY?
SHIT... WHY ISN'T T--?
OH...

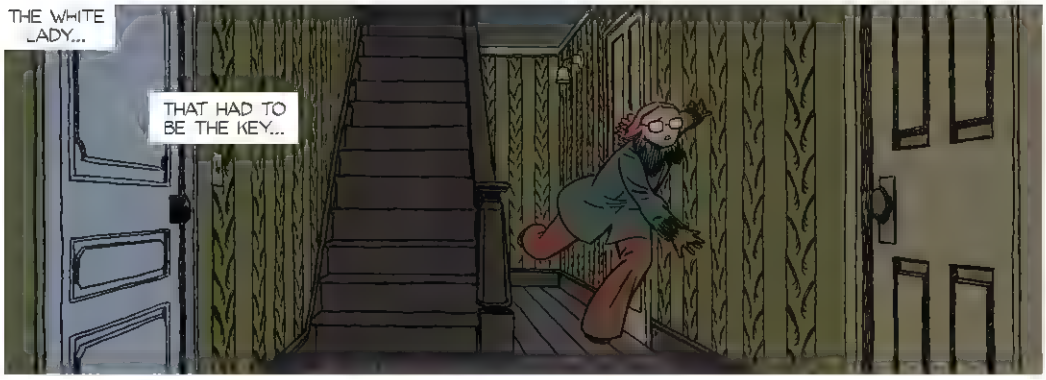
SH T.
YOU REALLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST DO YOU?
THAT'S SO DISAPPOINTING..
I EXPECTED YOU TO BE SPECIAL
SHIT... SO AN AX DIDN'T HURT HER...

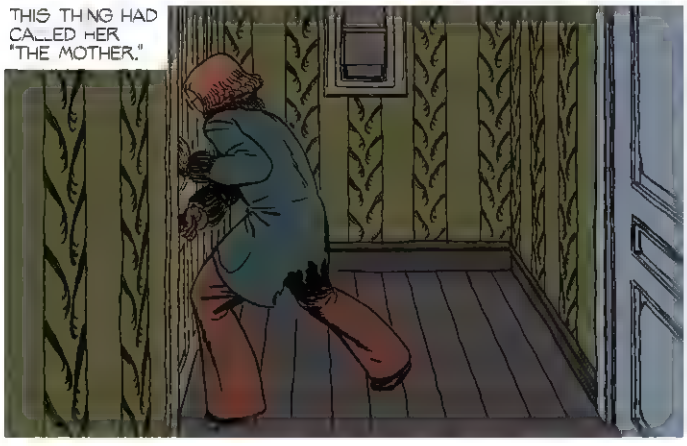
WHAT THE HELL WAS SHE?
NOT JUST A WITCH OR SORCERESS... BUT SOME KIND OF SHAPE-CHANGER...

MAYBE THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO.
FRIDAY NEEDED TO KNOW WHAT THIS THING WAS TO KNOW HOW TO STOP IT...
BUT SHE COULD SLOW IT DOWN.
urex
Bleach
IT WAS PARTLY IN HUMAN FORM, SO IT HAD HUMAN WEAKNESSES...
LIKE EYES.
GYAAA

HER MIND RAN EVEN FASTER THAN HER FEET DID THEN...
GOING DOWN ALL THE POSSIBILITIES...
WHAT THIS DETECTIVE MIGHT REALLY BE, UNDER HER SKIN...

AND AT THE SAME TIME, THERE'S ANOTHER VOICE IN HER HEAD...
DO YOU?!
FRANTIC... SNAPPING AT HERSELF TO THINK FASTER.
RAAAAAA
KRAASH
JESUS!


THE WHITE LADY...
THAT HAD TO BE THE KEY...


THIS THING HAD CALLED HER "THE MOTHER."

AND IF SHE ACTUALLY WAS TS MOTHER... THEN...

FUUHH--!!
KNNCH

NOT SO HAPPY NOW ARE YOU?
...HHH...
THE WHITE LADY WAS SOME KIND OF FOREST SPIRIT...

AT LEAST FRIDAY THINKS SO...
HHHKKK...

SHE FOUND HER IN A HIDDEN GROVE...
...EEEE...

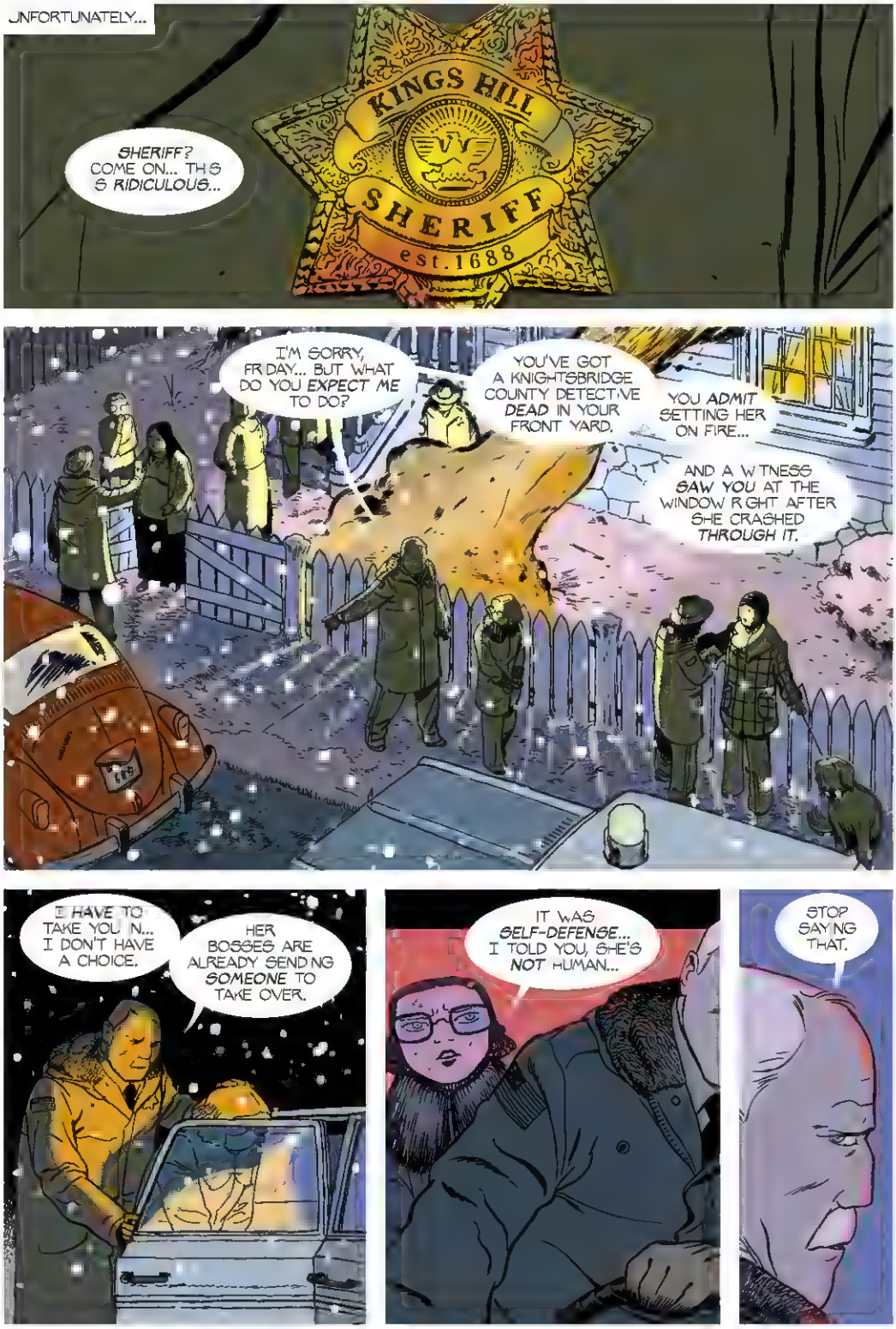
SO THEN... WHAT HURTS FOREST CREATURES?
ALL-PURPOSE
AQUA NET

GET OFF ME--!!
FUCK YOU.
ALL PURPOSE
AQUA NET
PROFESSIONAL
HAIR SPRAY

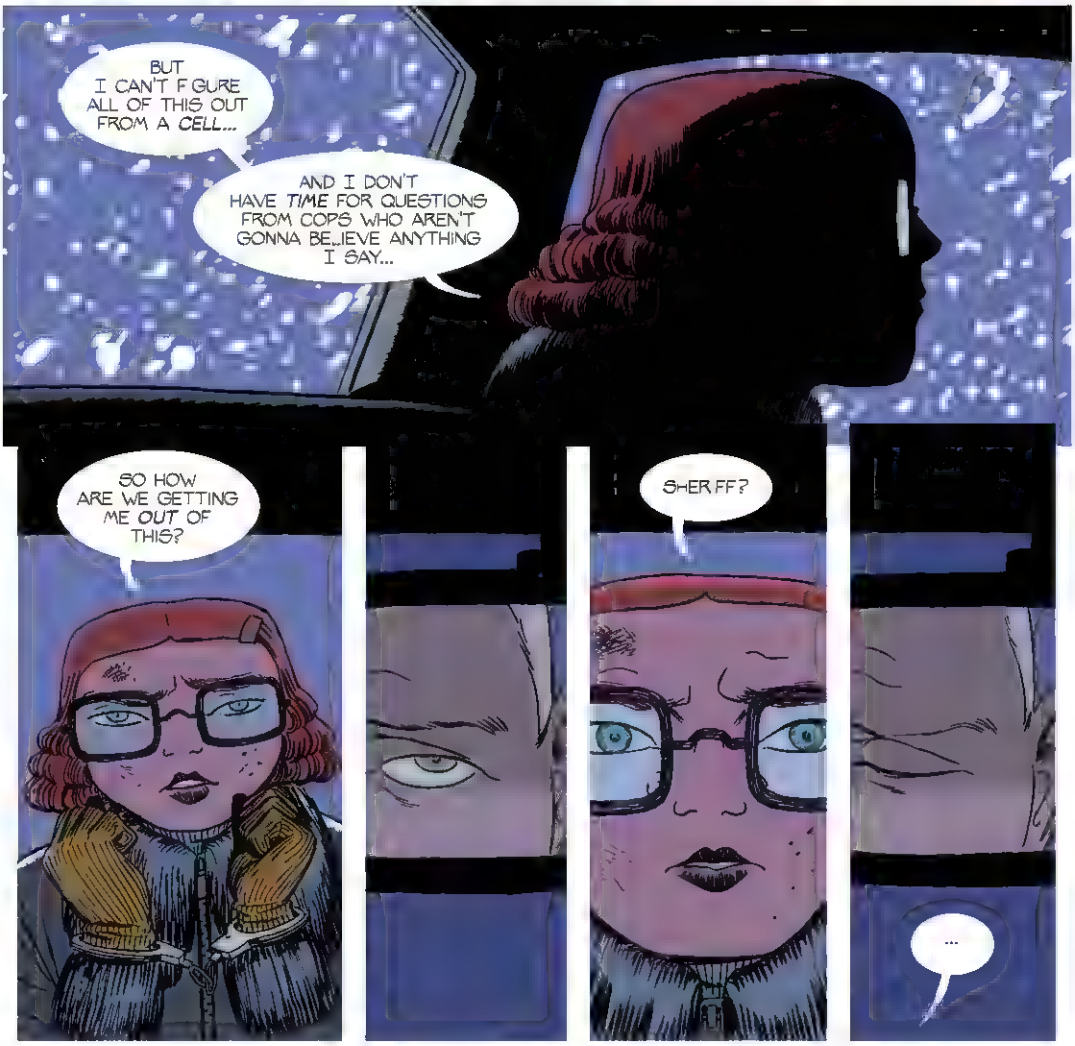
GYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
KSSSSSH

FRIDAY??
FRIDAY, ARE YOU HERE?!
MOM!

OH THANK GOD...
WHAT HAPPENED?
THERE'S SOMETHING ON FIRE IN THE YARD...
IT'S A PERSON... I THINK...
...CAN THAT... CAN THAT BE RIGHT?
LOOK, JUST... UH...
WHY DON'T YOU TWO SIT DOWN... I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN...
AND IT'S PROBABLY BEST IF YOU LET ME DO THE TALKING WHEN THE SHERIFF GETS HERE.
KNIGHTSBR
DETECTIVE
COUNTY


UNFORTUNATELY...
SHERIFF? COME ON... THIS IS RIDICULOUS...
KINGS HILL
SHERIFF
est.1688
I'M SORRY, FRIDAY... BUT WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO?
YOU'VE GOT A KNIGHTSBRIDGE COUNTY DETECTIVE DEAD IN YOUR FRONT YARD.
YOU ADMIT SETTING HER ON FIRE...
AND A WITNESS SAW YOU AT THE WINDOW RIGHT AFTER SHE CRASHED THROUGH IT.
I HAVE TO TAKE YOU IN... I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.
HER BOSSES ARE ALREADY SENDING SOMEONE TO TAKE OVER.
IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE... I TOLD YOU, SHE'S NOT HUMAN...
STOP SAYING THAT.

I KNOW SOME CRAZY STUFF HAPPENS AROUND HERE SOMETIMES...
BUT YOU *CAN'T* SAY STUFF LIKE THAT WHEN THEY *QUESTION* YOU.
PEOPLE WHO AREN'T FROM KINGS HILL... THEY DON'T REALLY *UNDERSTAND*...
YOU KNOW THAT.
WHOA... IT'S *REALLY* PICKIN' UP AGAIN...
THE NEWS SAYS WE'RE IN FOR ANOTHER *BLIZZARD*.
CHRIST, I CAN BARELY SEE THE STREET LIGHTS...
LOOK, SHERIFF BIXBY... THERE'S SOMETHING *BIGGER* GOING ON HERE...
LANCE'S DEATH WAS JUST *PART* OF IT.


BUT I CAN'T FIGURE ALL OF THIS OUT FROM A CELL...
AND I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR QUESTIONS FROM COPS WHO AREN'T GONNA BELIEVE ANYTHING I SAY...
SO HOW ARE WE GETTING ME OUT OF THIS?
SHERIFF?
...

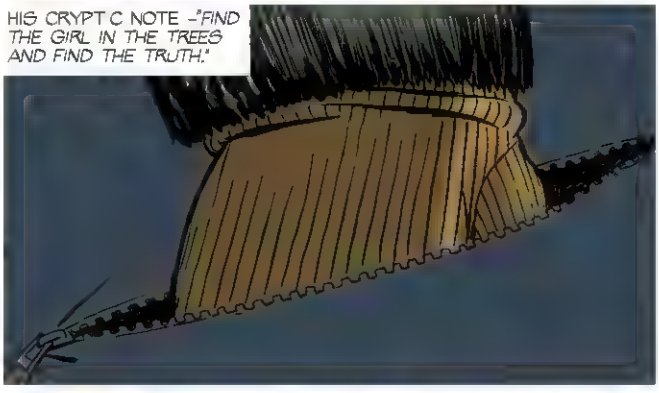
I DON'T KNOW.

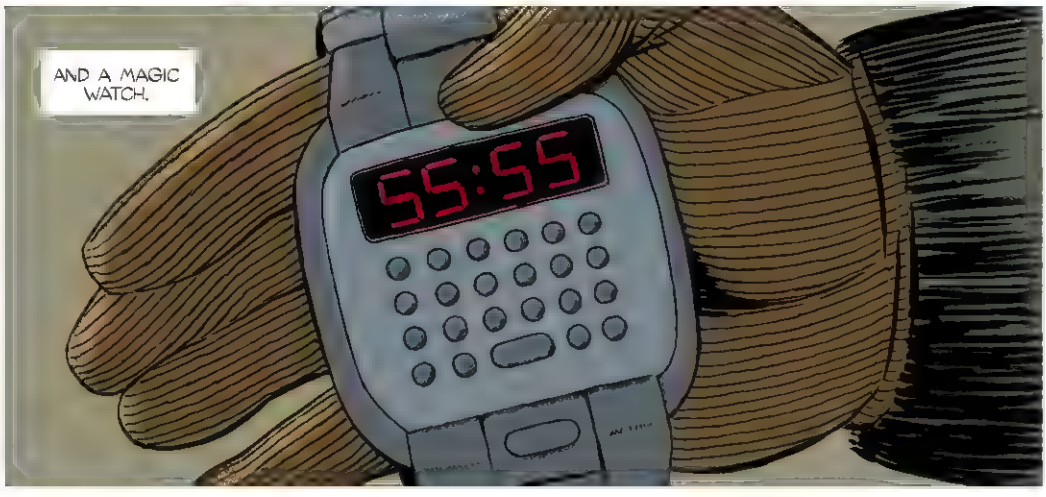
MORE BAD NEWS...
POLICE
THAT WAS THOSE *COUNTY DETECTIVES*... THEY AREN'T GONNA BE HERE 'TIL MORNING...
THE *PASS* IS CLOSED CAUSE OF THE STORM.
SERIOUSLY? HOW BIG IS THIS *STORM*?
BIG...
I'M GONNA CHECK ON THE BOILER AN' GET YOU SOME EXTRA BLANKETS...
WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO HUNKER DOWN *HERE* OVERNIGHT...
WELL... *FUCK*...

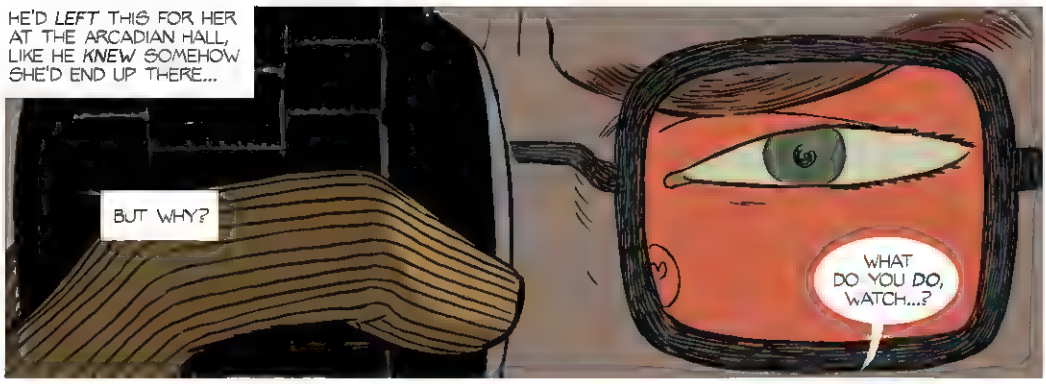
SHE CAN'T STAY *HERE* OVERNIGHT.
WHATEVER'S HAPPENING -THE WHITE LADY'S *BIG PLAN*- IT'S HAPPENING TOMORROW...
THAT'S WHAT THOSE CREEPS AT THE ARCADIAN HALL SAID.

AND SHE STILL HAS NO IDEA HOW SHE'S GOING TO STOP THEM.
LANCE WOULD HAVE A *PLAN* BY NOW, SHE THINKS...

AND THEN SHE REMEMBERS THAT LANCE *DID* HAVE A PLAN...
WAIT..

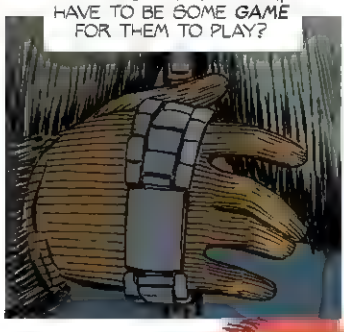

HIS CRYPTIC NOTE -*"FIND THE GIRL IN THE TREES AND FIND THE TRUTH."*

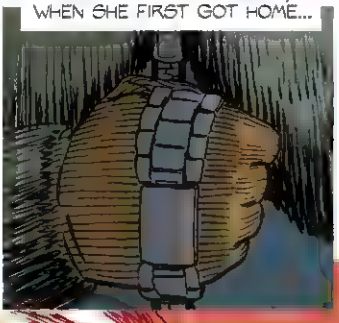

AND A MAGIC WATCH.
55:55

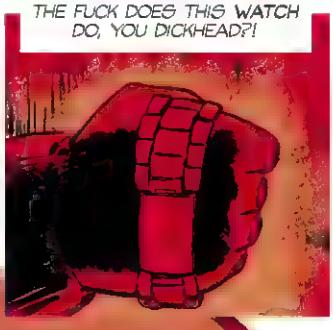

HE'D *LEFT* THIS FOR HER AT THE ARCADIAN HALL, LIKE HE *KNEW* SOMEHOW SHE'D END UP THERE...
BUT WHY?
WHAT DO YOU *DO*, WATCH...?

FUCKING LANCE AND HIS OBSCURE PUZZLE BULLSHIT...

GOD DAMN IT...

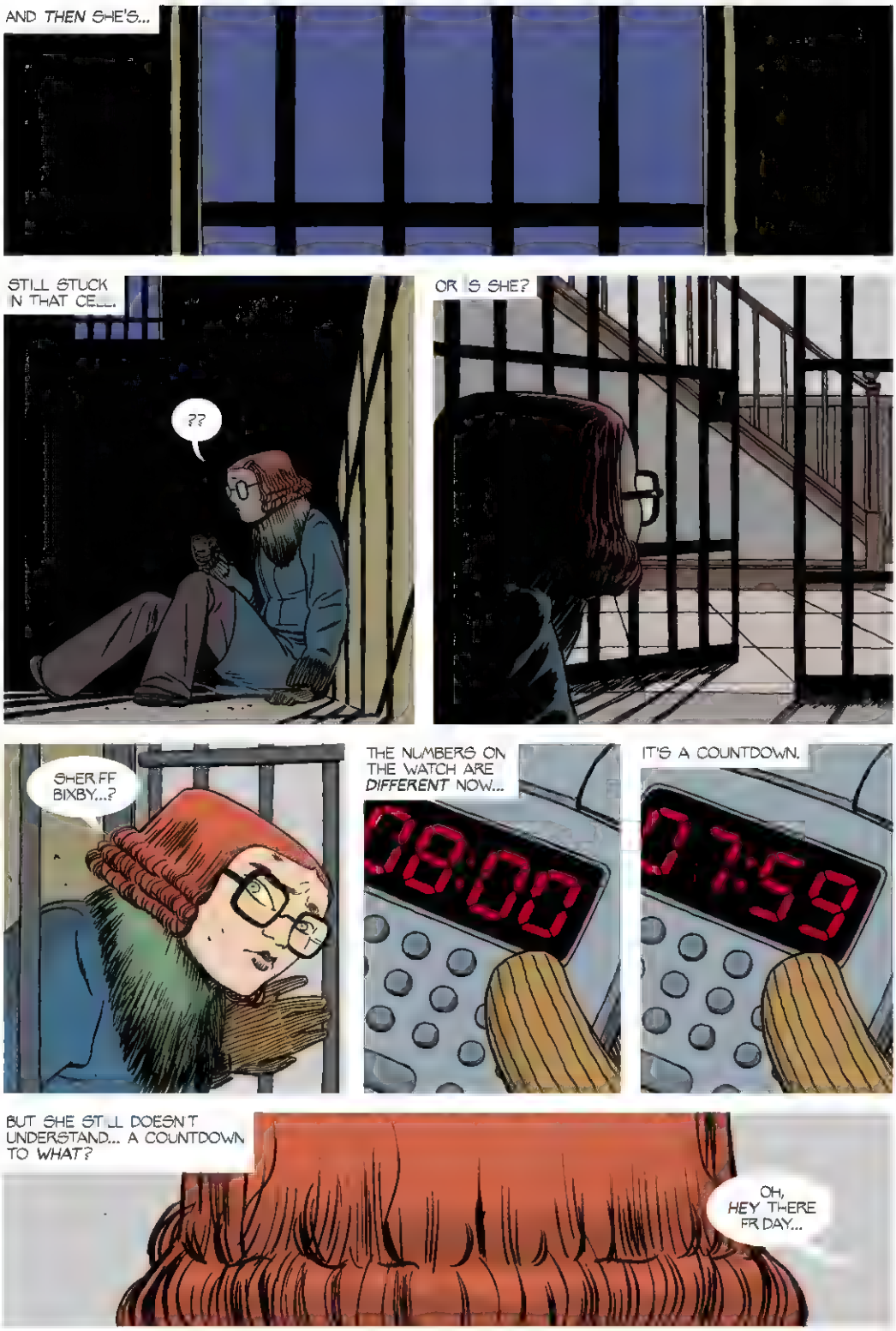

WHY DID EVERYTHING, EVEN HIS OWN *MURDER*, HAVE TO BE SOME *GAME* FOR THEM TO PLAY?


SHE *WISHES* SHE COULD GO BACK TO THAT NIGHT, WHEN SHE FIRST GOT HOME...

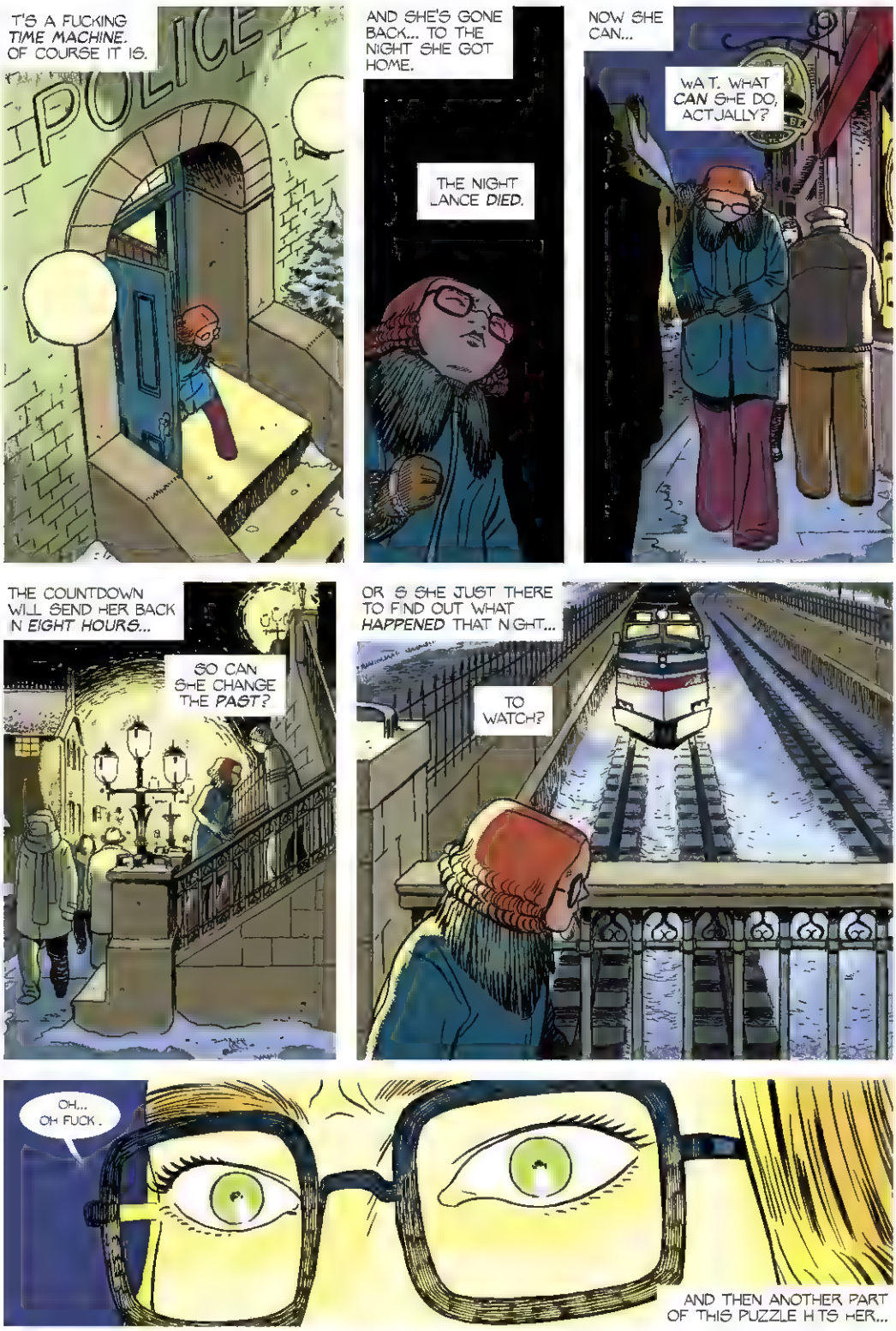

JUST SO SHE COULD *SCREAM* AT HIM -WHAT THE FUCK DOES THIS *WATCH* DO, YOU DICKHEAD?!

..WHAT..?

AND THAT'S WHEN THE WATCH STARTS WORKING.
FOR A FEW SECONDS IT FEELS LIKE THE ENTIRE WORLD IS FOLDING AROUND HER.
AND RUSHING THROUGH HER AT THE SAME TIME..
HOLY SHIT


AND *THEN* SHE'S...
STILL STUCK IN THAT CE...
??
OR IS SHE?
SHERIFF BIXBY...?
THE NUMBERS ON THE WATCH ARE *DIFFERENT* NOW...
08:00
IT'S A COUNTDOWN.
07:59
BUT SHE STILL DOESN'T UNDERSTAND... A COUNTDOWN TO *WHAT?*
OH, *HEY* THERE FRIDAY...

...I THINK SOMEBODY MUST'VE GOT THEIR *WIRES* CROSSED...
DEPUTY BUTTONS, DANNY'S DAD... *HE* WASN'T HERE BEFORE.
THE SHERIFF AND LANCE JUST WENT TO PICK YOU UP AT THE TRAIN STATION.
I'M SORRY, *WHAT*?
YEAH, YOU JUST MISSED 'EM...
THEY LEFT LIKE TWO MINUTES AGO.
HOLY SHIT...
THAT'S WHAT THE WATCH DOES...
SEEYA MR. BUTTONS... TELL *DANNY* I SAID HI.
WILL *DO*, KIDDO.


IT'S A FUCKING TIME MACHINE. OF COURSE IT IS.
POLICE
AND SHE'S GONE BACK... TO THE NIGHT SHE GOT HOME.
THE NIGHT LANCE DIED.
NOW SHE CAN...
WAIT. WHAT CAN SHE DO, ACTUALLY?
THE COUNTDOWN WILL SEND HER BACK IN EIGHT HOURS...
SO CAN SHE CHANGE THE PAST?
OR IS SHE JUST THERE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED THAT NIGHT...
TO WATCH?
OH... OH FUCK.
AND THEN ANOTHER PART OF THIS PUZZLE HITS HER...

AND IT'S LIKE A REVELATION... EVEN THOUGH IT MAKES HER FEEL *DOOMED* AT THE SAME TIME.
SHE DOESN'T NEED TO *FIND* THE GIRL IN THE TREES...
FRIDAY *IS* THE GIRL IN THE TREES.
End of Chapter Six

Thank God It's Friday

So Act Two closes and we find ourselves back at the beginning of the story. You might want to read the story over again looking for clues while you wait for the next chapter, because there's definitely a few hidden in there, from way back in the beginning.

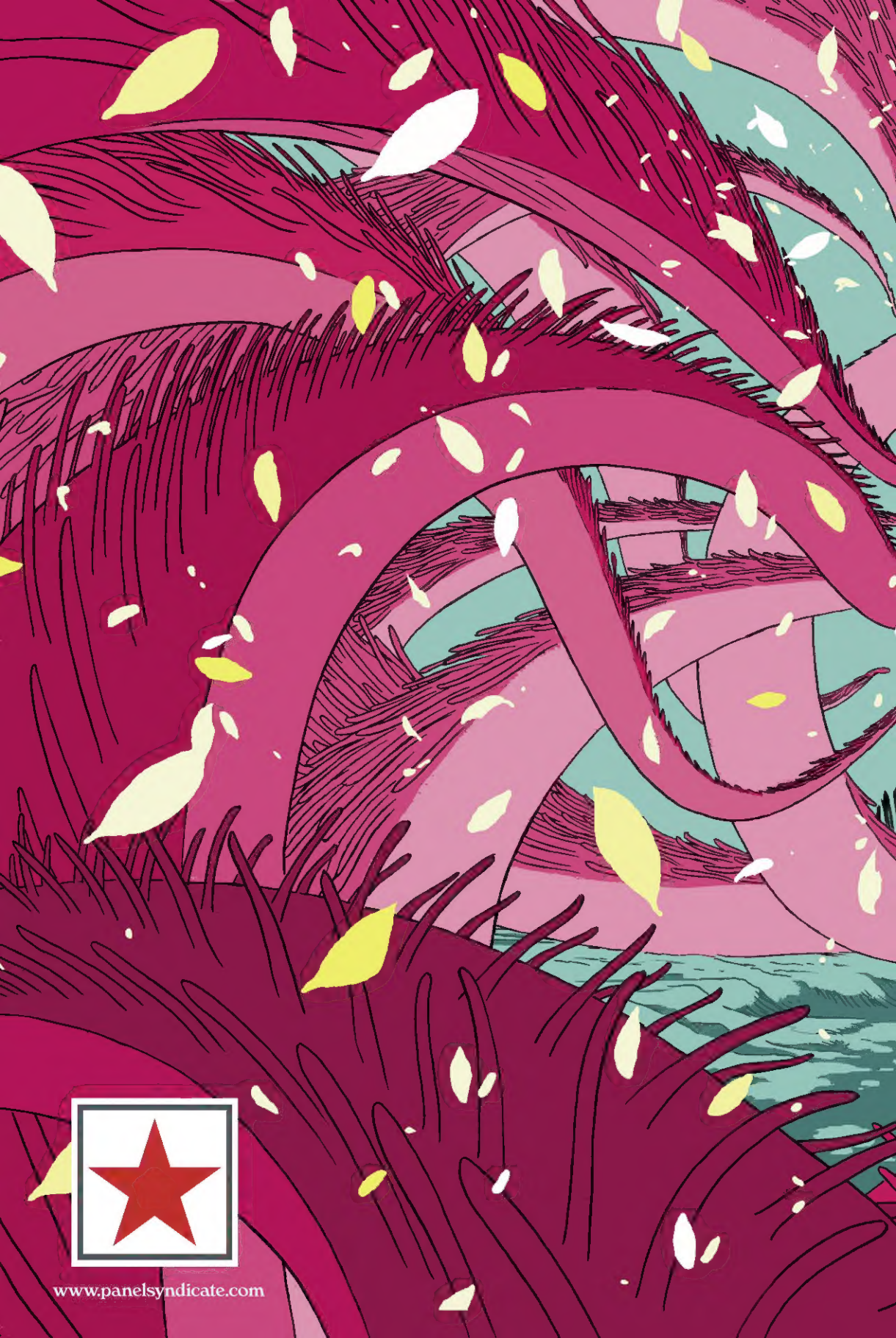
It's been a lot of fun the last few chapters seeing Friday in teen investigator mode, but it's been especially fun to see Marcos show her in action. Not just this last chapter, but also in the library and shadowing her targets in broad daylight on a stolen moped. This book looks exactly how it felt in my head, and that's an amazing thing.

At some point during the writing and drawing of chapter five, I remembered that Marcos is also one of my favorite action artists, and while I knew chapter six was going to be action-y, I made sure to go overboard a bit, and give him and Muntsa some room to show off. I think it worked out spectacularly. I mean, personally, I just want to look at that crazy monster fight over and over again. Somehow it's both horrific and otherworldly, and yet very real, too.

One of the reasons that I love mystery stories as a writer is because there are hidden story-lines in a mystery that only the writer knows – nefarious things going on elsewhere while the detective/hero is doing something else. It's stressful and complicated, and you have to track it all, the unseen parts of the story that no one else will ever see, but it's also a fun part of the process at the same time. It fires some part of my imagination that nothing else does. I suspect it's the same reason we love mysteries so much as readers or viewers, too. That sense of uncovering a hidden narrative.

Anyway, I've known since the first pages of chapter one that Friday would be the girl in the trees, eventually... I wasn't always sure exactly how that happened, but I knew she was there watching herself and Lance on the night of Lance's death. Back then I thought Lance's death would be the end of chapter one, so some stuff obviously shifted around, but there are some huge secrets to be revealed in the next few chapters of our story... including who killed Lancelot Jones. So I hope you'll stick around. The real weirdness has just begun...

Ed Brubaker
October 22



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